

Fires Bde. Legal Section News Letter

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The professional field of paralegal Soldiers has had a long standing distinction of holding some of the brightest and most competent Soldiers around.

The nature of the military occupational specialty requires great attention to detail and strong analytical skills to be successful in our day to day tasks. But then again, paralegals are administrative types who don't know much about real Soldiering, right? What does it take to break this old stigma and gain recognition as a Soldier as well as earning the respect as a paralegal? Ask Sgt. Matthew Edmonds.

Edmonds has earned the respect of the Fires Brigade on both levels. As a paralegal non-commissioned officer assigned to the 589th Brigade Support Battalion, Edmonds stood up the brigade legal section through the unit's reorganization, performed as the go-to legal NCO through the Brigade's pre-deployment training, and was a pillar of support during the deployment to Iraq.

He accomplished all of this as a newly promoted Sergeant without supervision while filling in as the brigade legal non-commissioned officer in charge; a position that remained vacant until February of this year.

I need to also mention that Edmonds was initially the only paralegal deployed with the Fires Brigade and was responsible for all legal actions throughout the Brigade as well as the additional units that fell under our jurisdiction on Camp Liberty for the first quarter of this deployment.

You may think, wow – what an outstanding performance as a paralegal under these circumstances – but there is much more to this Soldier's success than just his performance in the legal section.

Edmonds has recently begun to display his tactical abilities at NCO competitions within the Brigade. It all started with a Battery NCO of the Month board where he was sent forward to represent Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Fires Brigade to compete at the Brigade Separates (Battalion level) NCO of the Month board.

Edmonds dominated the competition and won. He then went on to the Fires Brigade Separates NCO of the Quarter board, where he stunned the panel with his knowledge and performance through an excruciating barrage of questions. Once again, he surfaced victorious.

Edmonds will next be competing at the Brigade NCO of the Quarter Board representing the Brigade Separates against the winners from all remainder of the Battalion NCO of the Quarter Boards.

But wait, there's more. The Fires Brigade recently held a weapons competition consisting of a 50-question written exam and hands on tasks, such as clearing, disassembling, assembling, functions check, maintenance, and operations, of the M9 pistol, M16A2 rifle, M249 Automatic Rifle, and M2 .50 Caliber Machine Gun.

Edmonds entered this competition representing HHB, Fires Brigade to compete against the NCOs from other companies throughout the Brigade, many of whom were unit armors specializing in weapon's maintenance. Standing true to his recent trend, Edmonds once again came out on top with a margin over second place of over 40 points.

The Judge Advocate General Corps and the paralegal career field have been well represented at the Fires Brigade and Edmonds is an outstanding example of a truly diverse paralegal NCO.